

NEWS RELEASE

Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo

For information
Contact Ted Harbin

(660) 254-1900
imteditor@gmail.com

Big money brings big names to Oklahoma Panhandle

GUYMON, Okla. – Two decades ago, Guymon was on the bottom of the food chain in the world of ProRodeo.

The rodeo that went along with the annual Pioneer Days celebration was just another event, a little gathering at the Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena. A couple hundred contestants strolled in, then out, of town for the competition, which featured the least amount of sponsorship money in the purse that was allowable and still be part of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

The Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo is the happening event in the PRCA the opening weekend of May every year, just as it will be this year when the event will bring nearly 1,000 to town for an entire week of festivities that begin April 27. There will be competition all week long, and there will be four paid performances on May 1, two on May 2 and one on May 3.

Still, some of the big names in the sport made their annual trek to the Oklahoma Panhandle. It's just that their accomplishments in Texas County went relatively unnoticed. Some came because it was old-home week, a return to their roots or to their college days. Others came for other reasons.

That all started to change in the 1990s. Texas County became recognized not only as the home of a great college rodeo program but also some of the greatest cowboys in the sport. Robert Etbauer of Goodwell won the 1990-91 saddle bronc riding world championships.

His brother, Billy, won it in 1992, all while rodeoing out of Goodwell. Their traveling partners, Dan Etbauer and Craig Latham, added to the popularity mix, then folks started noticing the number of elite rodeo hands who had ties to Texas County.

Oh, and some of those folks started putting their gold buckles where their mouths were, laying a foundation of what has become one of the best rodeos in the country every year. They knocked on the doors of businesses and started raising the funds it takes to put on a world-class rodeo.

“Those guys walked into the businesses, and it proved to be difficult to turn down a world champion,” said Ken Stonecipher, a longtime member of the rodeo committee and its former chairman.

The community then picked up the steam. Volunteers began devoting their time and talents to producing a quality rodeo. Year after year, Guymon has been recognized nationally, whether it was through the television broadcasts or just the word being passed around from cowboy to cowboy.

“A lot of good people have done a lot of good work to make this thing happen,” Robert Etbauer said.

Sponsors have done their fair share, too.

By partnering with the rodeo to help produce one of the best events in the country, they see the benefits that come with being involved. They see the economic impact the event places on Texas County.

They see the tremendous marketing tool the rodeo is when considering the tourism possibilities. They see that word of mouth about the Pioneer Days Rodeo has people in and out of rodeo talking about Guymon.